

Literature, &c.

British Magazines for July.

Dublin University Magazine.

EXCITING SCENE.

[We select the following extract from a Tale by James, in this periodical, entitled, "Arrah Neil, or Times of Old." The scene is laid in England, during the civil war. The house of Lady Margaret Langley is taken possession of by a body of Parliamentary troops, under the command of Captain Hargood, who had strong suspicion that some of the malignants (as the King's party was termed) were concealed in the premises. Such was the case. Lord Beverley, a young nobleman, who had been wounded in a recent skirmish, had been conveyed there a few days previous to the premises being searched, and taken possession of as above stated.]

LADY MARGARET sought the private passage into the apartments where the earl was concealed, and passing with a grave look through that which she called the chamber of atonement, threaded a long and narrow corridor constructed in the wall of the building and mounted a staircase of no greater width, which led to the sleeping room of Lord Beverley, where she found him reading one of the books with which she had taken care to supply him.

"Well, my dear lord, she said, "they have found us out, I fear."

"Indeed, Lady Margaret," replied the earl calmly; "then I suppose the sooner I quit my present quarters the better."

"I don't think so, my lord," rejoined the old lady; "I am not sure that it will not be wise to have a struggle for it, and that very speedily. We have got fifteen stout men in the house, and you make sixteen. They with their captain are twenty one. I have a good store of arms here too, and I could bring the people round, or part of them through these passages to fall upon them in the rear, while the others attacked them in front."

"No, no, my dear lady," replied the earl smiling; "that must not be done on any account. In the first place we might lose the day, and then you and yours, and all that is most dear to me on earth, would be exposed to violence, of which I dare not think. The fire of musquetry too in such a house as this might lead to terrible disasters, and besides, whatever were the result, unless Hull fell and the king can hold this part of Yorkshire, you would be obliged to fly from your own dwelling and give it up as a prey to the parliamentary soldiery. It must not be thought of. If you can but keep these men from pushing their discoveries farther till night fall, and get me out by the most private way, I will take my chance alone. It is the only course, depend upon it."

"Oh, we will keep them at bay," replied Lady Margaret. "They have been quaking for their lives this last three days, and while my stout yeoman remain in the house dare not stir one from another for fear of being taken unawares. I have ordered my men to remain all day till nightfall; so we are secure till then, and you may rest safe, for sooner than they should break in here, I will even burn the house about their ears. If you are resolved to go—"

"Quite," replied the earl.

"Then I will despatch one of the young men," replied Lady Margaret, "as if he were going home, to have a horse ready for you on the road to York. He can come back again to help us when it is done. In the meanwhile I will send you food and wine, that you may be strong for your ride; but I must tell you that there is a party of horse out about Market Weighton, said to be cavaliers, and it were well that you should be upon your guard if you fly that way, lest they should prove daws in peacock's feathers."

"Nay, that cannot well be," replied the earl. "If I be not much mistaken, the news I sent by Walton will soon bring the king before the gates of Hull. It would not surprise me if these were some of his majesty's own parts, and I will direct my steps towards them with all speed."

Some further conversation took place regarding the arrangements to be made; and it was agreed that, as soon as Lady Margaret thought the earl's escape might be attempted with a probability of success, either she herself or one of her fair companions, should visit him, and give him notice; and after all had been settled, Lady Margaret, taking her leave of him, returned to the room where she left her niece and Arrah Neil.

She found them speaking eagerly, poor Arrah's colour somewhat heightened, and Annia Walton's eye bent down, with a dew drop resting on the lid.

"Nay, but tell my aunt," said Miss Walton. "Indeed, dear Arrah, you should tell her."

"No," replied Arrah Neil, with her own wild eagerness, "I will tell no one," and then turning to Lady Margaret, she laid her hand upon her arm, gazing with an appalling look in her face and saying, "I have a scheme too; and she only fears it on account of danger to myself. Now, I fear no danger in a good cause; and I am sure you will trust me, will you not, dear Lady Margaret?"

"That I will, my child," replied Lady Margaret Langley, "and ask no questions either."

"Nay, but hear," cried Annie Walton, "she is always ready to sacrifice herself for others, and if she does not tell you, I will, my dear aunt."

"Nay, nay," replied Lady Margaret, "you will not betray counsel, Annie, I am sure. Let her have her own way. It is right, I will answer for it; and if it be too generous for men, God will repay it. I will trust her."

Annie Walton shook her head; but the conversation dropped there; and the good old lady proceeded to make all preparations for the execution of her scheme.

The hours went by, the yeoman still remained at the hall. Captain Hargood continued to act upon the plan which he had previously followed; but showed no slight symptoms of uneasiness at the prolonged occupation of the house by Lady Margaret's tenantry, appearing from time to time with an indifferent and sauntering air, which ill concealed no small degree of apprehension at all that he remarked, and retiring speedily to his men again, without venturing to suffer them to separate for a moment.

The hour of supper came on, and the table in the hall was crowded. Lady Margaret appeared for a moment, and bade her guests make merry; but two of her servants were stationed in the vestibule beyond, which communicated with the stairs and passages that led to the part of the house in possession of the militia, and whenever a step was heard above, one of them approached the foot of the staircase, and listened, to insure against surprise.

Night fell, and as soon as it was completely dark, Annie Walton accompanied her aunt to the good dame's own chamber, and while Lady Margaret herself remained there, proceeded with a lamp through the dark passages of the wall, to give her lover the warning agreed upon.

They might be pardoned, if they lingered a moment or two together; but at length descending with a quiet step, they approached the chamber where Lady Margaret waited. As soon as the door was opened, the old lady held up her finger, saying, "Hush! I heard a noise just now; but I think it is merely those clown in the hall, roaring over their liquor. Let us listen, however."

They paused for a minute or two, but all was quite still.

"It is quiet now," said the earl. "We should hear, if any one was in your sitting room, and I am to go out into the fields by that way, you say."

"Yes; it is all quiet now," said Lady Margaret; and advancing to the door which led to the withdrawing room, she opened it quietly but quickly, followed close by the earl and Annie Walton. No sooner was it open, however, than Lady Margaret stopped with a start; and Annie Walton with a low cry, clung to her lover's arm—for the room before them was full of soldiery.

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried Hargood, with a dry, mocking laugh. "So the dead have come to life again! Stand, sir, and give an account of yourself—Lady, you are a mighty skillful plotter, but we have doubled upon you, and I will not quit this house till I find this bird's nest."

"Run round, Annie," whispered Lady Margaret to her niece, "through the secret chamber, by the passage to the left and the door in the wall, where you will see a bolt. It will lead you to the hall. Bring our men upon them from behind: we will fight for it still."

"Miss Walton took a step to obey; but the movement was not unperceived by the captain of the militia, who exclaimed, in a loud voice, turning his head slightly towards his men,

"Cover them with your guns!—Whoever stirs a step, I order them to fire!" he added, addressing the party at the entrance of the room.

But the stout hearted old lady was not to be daunted; and, motioning the earl back, she suddenly shut to the door, turned the key, and stepped behind the shelter of the wall, drawing Annie with her.

There was a momentary pause, to hear if Captain Hargood would keep his word; but not a gun was fired, and Lady Margaret reiterated her desire that Annia would run round and bring her tenantry from the hall into the rear of the roundheads.

"But no," she cried, interrupting herself. "Come with me, Annie. Come with me, my lord. They must be some time breaking in."

"It is useless, I fear, dear lady," said the earl. "They have better information than we imagined, and I think have been reinforced. There seem to me to be more than twenty men, so that most probably your people are disarmed."

"Hark," cried Annie Walton,—"there is a trumpet without! Oh, they have many more with them, depend upon it!"

"A trumpet," cried Lady Margaret, listening and her withered face assuming a look of joy as she heard the long, shrill blast, ringing upon the air. "So there is! So there is! Cavaliers, to the rescue! This is our dear Arrah's doing. These are king's troops, my lord. No roundheaded puritan ever blew a blast like that."

"On my life, I believe it is true," cried the earl, approaching the window, and looking out: "a party have crossed the stream, and are coming over the meadows."

As he spoke, there was a loud murmuring noise in the neighbouring chamber, and then the sound of a blow, as if from an axe upon the door of the room in which they were. The earl instantly threw open the casement, and vaulted out; and the next moment his voice was heard, calling loudly, "Hither, hither!" At the same time, however, the blows upon the door were repeated, and though made of

strong, solid oak, it crashed, and one panel gave way.

"Quick, Annie," cried Lady Margaret; "let us through the other door. We can set them of defiance yet." But just as they reached it, a still heavier blow of the axe dashed the lock from its fastenings, and the broken door flew back.

At the same moment, however, a man sprang into the open window. It was the Earl of Beverley; but another, and another followed. The casement on the right, too, was burst open, and two or three leaped in at a time, casting themselves in the way of the advancing militia men.

"Down with your arms, traitors!" cried a voice that Miss Walton thought she remembered.

"Back Annie! Back my beloved!—Away Lady Margaret! Keep out of the fire," exclaimed the earl; and drawing her niece with her, the old lady retired into what she called the Chamber of Atonement; pushing the door nearly to, but not quite.

The next instant a musket was discharged; and then came volley after volley, then the clash of swords, and cries and shouts, and words of command, with every now and then a deadly groan between, while, through the clink of the door that was left open, crept the pale blue smoke, rolling round, with a sulphurous smell, and the blast of the trumpet echoed from without, as if calling up fresh spirits to the fray.

Lady Margaret Langley held her niece's hand firmly in hers, while Annie Walton bent her fair brow upon her old relation's shoulder, and struggled with the tears that would fain have burst forth.

"The strife in the neighbouring room seemed to last an age, though in truth its duration was but a few minutes, and then came a pause, not of absolute silence, for the sounds were still various and many; but there was a comparative stillness, and a voice was heard speaking, though the words were indistinct. The moment after some one near exclaimed—

"Lay down your arms then, traitors. We will grant no conditions to rebels with arms in their hands. Hie to Major Randal, Barecolt. Tell him to guard well every door, that no one escape. Now, sir, do you surrender?"

Annie Walton recognized her brother's voice and murmured, "He, at least is safe."

"We will surrender upon quarter, sir," answered the voice of Capt. Hargood.

"You shall surrender at discretion, or die where you stand," answered Lord Walton.

"Make your choice quickly, or we fire!"

Almost as he spoke there came a dull clang, as if arms grounded suddenly on the wooden floor; and, greatly to the relief of poor Annie Walton's heart, the voice of Lord Beverley was heard exclaiming—

"Treat them gently, treat them gently! They are prisoners, and must abide his majesty's pleasure."

"Thank God," said Miss Walton—"thank God."

"Hush," said Lady Margaret. "Let us look out, Annie. There is a smell of burning wood."

As she spoke, she approached the door and opened it. Annie Walton followed close upon her steps, and gazed into the room beyond. It was a sad and fearful scene. The bedchamber of Lady Margaret, in which the principal struggle had taken place, was comparatively dark, receiving its only light from the glare of the lamp and sconces in the drawing room on the other side. The room was well nigh filled with men; others were seen through the open door, and every sort of attitude into which the human figure can be thrown, was displayed amongst them. At the further side of the chamber appeared Captain Hargood and some eight or nine of the militia, with their arms cast down, and sullen despondency upon their faces. Near them lay three or four others, still and motionless: one fallen upon his back with his arms extended; one upon his face; with his limbs doubled up beneath him. A little more in advance was another militia man, sitting on the ground, supporting himself with one hand upon a chair, while the other was pressed tight upon his side; and beside Lady Margaret's bed knelt a young cavalier, with his fair curling hair streaming down his shoulders, and his face buried in the bed clothes. Several of the royalist party were stretched upon the ground near, the faces and hands of most of the others were bloody and grimed with gunpowder, and several were seen in different parts of the room tying up the wounded limb or staunching the flowing blood.

In the front stood Lord William and the Earl of Beverley;—the one armed, and with the stern frown of vehement excitement upon his lofty brow; the other with no arms but a sword, and with his fine and speaking countenance, animated certainly, but calm and open. Hanging in a thick cloud over the whole were wreaths of sulphurous smoke, and a stream of a lighter colour was finding its way in through the open door, and slowly mingling with that which the discharge of fire arms had produced.

The party of the cavaliers was far the most numerous, and at the moment when Lady Margaret looked in, several of them were advancing to secure the prisoners. Lord Walton was in the act of giving various orders, from which it was apparent that the house was surrounded by a considerable party of the loyalist cavalry; but no one seemed to notice, in the interest of the scene before them, the fact that there was as Lady Margaret had observed, a strong and growing smell of burning wood, or that ever and anon, across the smoke, which was finding its way in from the next room, came a fitful flash, unlike the quiet and steady light of the candle.

For a short time even Lady Margaret's at-

ention was withdrawn from what she had remarked, to the striking scene before her; but after a moment's pause she exclaimed—

"Charles, Charles, there is something on fire in the drawing-room!"

Lord Walton started and turned round, gave a smile to Annie and her aunt, and then seeming suddenly to catch the meaning of her words, directed a look towards the door, and instantly strode forward, passing Captain Hargood and the prisoners, and entering the drawing-room.

The moment that he was actually within that chamber, his voice was heard, exclaiming aloud,

"Here, Wilson, Hardy! Help here—the place is on fire!" and a general rush was made toward the other room; where it was found that some spark or piece of lighted wedding having fallen upon a low hangings had set the whole in a flame, which communicating itself to the old dry paneling and carved cornices, was running round the chamber on all sides.

Every exertion was now made to extinguish the fire. Some of the soldiers were sent, under Lady Margaret's direction, to get buckets from the hall, where they found and released the tenantry and servants, who had been locked in by the militia and secured under a guard. All efforts, however, proved vain. The flames spread from room to room; but little water was to be procured, except from the stream, and Lord Walton and the earl soon turned their attention to save the valuable furniture, pictures, and plate.

The scene of confusion that ensued is indescribable; and, indeed, to the mind of Annie Walton herself it all seemed more like a dream than a reality, till she found herself standing in the gardens of the house, with her hands clasped in that of Arrah Neil, and old Major Randal saying a few words of somewhat dry but kindly compliment; while Lady Margaret, at her side, patted the head of her old dog Basto, murmuring, "Let it burn, boy, let it burn. It has lasted its time, and seen many a heartache. So let it burn, for the villains have not had their way, and the right has triumphed."

To Annie Walton, however, it was a sad sight. Twice, within a few months, had she beheld the place where she had made her home, a prey to the flames; and though she was not one to give way to idle superstitions, it seemed as if it were a warning that she was no more to have a fixed abode, and she said to herself with a sigh—

"Well, I will follow Charles wherever fortune shall lead him. Peace and repose, security and comfort, are gone from the land; and I must share the troubles of the rest."

A little in advance of the spot where she stood, guarded by two of the soldiers of the troop, was a large pile of plate, and a number of other valuable articles, and as Miss Walton was thus thinking, her brother approached Lady Margaret at a rapid pace, from the house saying—

"My dear aunt, I fear it is impossible to save any part of the building. Where shall we send these things for safety?"

"Let the house burn, my boy, let the house burn," said Lady Margaret. "It is not worth the hair of an honest man's head to save it. Take the pictures, and all the rest of the things, but the plate, down to the steward's, and especially the papers. As to the silver, we will carry it away to the King at York. He may need it more than I shall."

"He is not at York, my dear aunt," replied Lord Walton. "Ere noon to-morrow, I trust we will be in Hull. Luckily we were on our march, and not very far distant from the hall, when our dear Arrah here, found us out, and told us of the strait in which you were placed."

As he spoke, he took Arrah Neil's fair hand, and pressed his lips upon it warmly; and Lady Margaret, suddenly laying her hand upon his arm, exclaimed—

"Ah, Charles, when I am dead you must be her protector."

"I will," replied Lord Walton, and then added still more earnestly—"I will."

Arrah Neil gazed stedfastly in his face, and her beautiful eyes filled with tears.

Blackwood's Magazine.

CAUSES OF THE INCREASE OF CRIME.

[This sterling periodical for the month, opens

with an elaborate article on this subject.

From it we make the following selections.]

Various causes have combined to produce demoralization among the vast crowd, thus suddenly attracted, by the alluring prospect of high wages and steady employment, from the rural to the manufacturing districts, in the first place, they acquired wealth before they had learned how to use it, and that is, perhaps, the cause of the rapid degeneracy of mankind. High wages flowed in upon them before they had acquired the artificial wants in the gratification of which they could be innocently spent. Thence the general recourse to the grosser and sensual enjoyments, which are powerful alike on the savage, and the sage. Men who, in the wilds of Ireland and the mountains of Scotland were making three or four shillings a week, or in Sussex ten, suddenly found themselves as cotton spinners, iron-moulders, colliers, or mechanics, in possession of from twenty to thirty shillings. Meanwhile, their habits and inclinations had undergone scarce any alteration; they had no taste for comfort in dress, lodging, or furniture; and as to laying by money, the thing, of course, was not for a moment thought of. Thus this vast addition to their incomes was spent almost exclusively on eating and drinking. The extent to which gross sensual enjoyment was thus spread among those first settlers in the regions of commercial opulence, is incredible. It is an ascertained fact,